

Service Area Plan

Department Of Housing And Community Development

State Fire Prevention Code Administration (56203)

Service Area Background Information

Service Area Description

The purpose of the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is to provide safety to life and property from the hazards of fire or explosion for the citizens of the Commonwealth. There are currently 36 FTEs and six P-14s assigned to this activity. The SFMO has authority to enforce the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) in all areas of the Commonwealth and is mandated by the Code of Virginia (COV) to inspect state residential buildings, state owned or operated college dormitories, public schools (in areas without local fire prevention inspections), adult living facilities (in areas without local fire prevention inspections), and child care facilities with religious exemption from licensure by the Department of Social Services.

Additionally, the SFMO provides assistance, including both plans review and construction inspections, to the Department of General Services on state construction projects to insure conformance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). The SFMO is under contract to inspect Health Care Facilities, primarily nursing facilities and mental health buildings, for conformance with federal standards (Life Safety Code) and effective October 1, 2003, the SFMO began issuing permits for fireworks on state property.

Many local governments in the Commonwealth opt not to appoint a fire official. In these areas, the SFMO is the only available fire authority. In addition to the COV mandates for inspection of buildings in areas without a local fire official as listed above, the SFMO inspects childcare facilities and local correctional facilities and responds to requests or complaints under provisions of the SFPC. The Explosives Safety Program, including issuing permits for the storage, sale, and use of explosives in areas without local enforcement, are assigned to the SFMO.

In addition to the above mentioned areas of responsibility, staff attend and provide training to client groups. Client groups include the Virginia Fire Prevention Association, State Fire Chiefs Association, State Firefighters Association, Virginia Building Officials Association and other fire and building organizations in the state as well as architects, engineers, local government officials, state agencies and officials, building owners, builders, and the general public.

Direct immediate and long-term benefits from this activity include reduction in the loss of life and property from the hazards of fire or explosion and a safer environment in which to live and work. Inspection programs described above insure fire protection and fire safety systems are maintained to standards under which they were constructed and insure safe storage and use of hazardous materials and provide for emergency planning and training for staff and occupants. Technical assistance and training programs for code officials, design professionals, contractors, building owners and other clients described above enhance the uniform and accurate application of codes and standards statewide providing increased safety statewide.

This service area also seeks to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the SFMO by implementing a SFMO Program Management System. A funding request is included in the Governor's introduced Budget Bill HB30/SB/30 to realize cost-savings by developing and implementing a new integrated, automated, Web-enabled electronic field inspection and management reporting system for the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capability. The cost would be a one time GF appropriation of \$145,000.

Service Area Alignment to Mission

This service area directly aligns with DHCD's mission of working in partnership to make Virginia's communities safe, affordable, and prosperous places in which to live and work and do business.

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Service Area Statutory Authority

- § 27-97.2 Statewide Fire Prevention Code Law
- § 36-139.3 Adult Care Facilities, Public Schools, State Owned/Operated College/University Student Residence Facilities, State Owned and Residential Care Buildings
- § 36-98.1 State Owned Buildings
- § 63.1-196.3 Child Care Facilities

Service Area Customer Base

Customer(s)	Served	Potential
Inspections of state construction projects	1,527	1,527
Adult Care Residences inspected	315	315
Child Care facilities inspected	545	545
inspections in response to requests, complaints or hazardous conditions	347	347
Life Safety Code (nursing home and other health care) facilities inspected	474	474
nightclubs	3	70
permits issued for the use, manufacturing, storage and sale of explosives	417	417
private hospitals	0	26
responses to requests for technical assistance on content, intent, and application of building and fire codes from all client groups	10,014	10,014
schools inspected	1,711	1,811
sets of construction documents reviewed for conformance with applicable codes and standards	508	508
state correctional facilities inspected	536	536
state-owned dormitories inspected	544	600

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Service Area Products and Services

- Adult Care residences - Annual inspections are mandated by the COV in all areas without local enforcement. §36-139.3
- Schools - Annual inspections are mandated by the COV in all areas without local enforcement. §36-139.3
- State Owned/Operated College/University Student Resident Facilities - Annual inspections are mandated by the COV. §36-139.3 for all dormitories and other residential facilities owned, leased or otherwise operated by a state college or university.
- State Owned Buildings - The SFMO is mandated by the COV to provide assistance to the Department of General Services on the fire protection and prevention provisions of the VUSBC for all new construction, renovations, and additions. We provide plans review, consultative and construction inspection assistance. §36-98.1
- State Owned Residential Care Buildings - Primarily Correctional and Mental Health Facilities, annual inspections are mandated by the COV. §36-139.3
- Health Care Facilities - Primarily nursing homes and mental health facilities, we are under contract to inspect these facilities for conformance with the Life Safety Code (LSC) and are reimbursed with federal money. A very important program that provides staffing and allows the SFMO to be involved in a large number of facilities.
- Child Care Facilities - The SFMO is mandated by the COV to inspect childcare centers operated by religious institutions, which are exempt from licensure by the Virginia Department of Social Services if not inspected by local fire officials. In addition, we respond to requests from the DSS to inspect other licensed child care centers. §63.1-196.3
- Local Jails - SFMO responds to requests for inspections from the Department of Corrections.
- Explosives Safety Program - As part of the statewide fire prevention code (SFPC), this includes issuing permits for the storage, use, and sale of explosives as well as investigating complaints. §27-97 COV and Section F107.2 SFPC
- Requests/Complaints - Approximately 2% of our inspection work load, the SFMO responds to complaints and requests for inspections based on the SFPC.
- Consultative Services - SFMO provides assistance to building and fire officials, architects, engineers, contractors, and building owners and occupants. An extremely important function of the SFMO, 95% of this assistance is on the SFPC or fire safety provisions of the VUSBC including referenced standards on automatic sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, standpipe systems and other fire suppression and protection systems. With limited resources, many small local governments rely heavily on this assistance for the proper application of the VUSBC and to ensure initial conformance with the code.
- Public Service and Education Programs - The SFMO also develops and presents education programs geared towards college administrators, inspectors, school principals, etc. The SFMO makes public service announcements through the news media, including TV, radio and newspapers, during the year. News releases include warnings on the dangers associated with Christmas trees and tips to help prevent fires during the holiday and heating seasons, safety information during Fire Prevention Week, and dangers of fireworks during the 4th of July activities.

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Factors Impacting Service Area Products and Services

- Need for a full-time educator to help develop and implement educational programs to reach more customers, clients, and people at risk
- Need for hand-held personal computer equipment to conduct inspections and documentation. Currently inspectors depend on lap-top computers in vans or sedans, with printers, using invertors (converting from AC to DC) to power the equipment. Process is cumbersome and time consuming
- Need for computer software development to aid in improving efficiency in conducting and documenting inspections, reporting procedures, and provide a better means for data collection
- Fair Labor Standards Act ruling on all inspectors has made some inspectors non-exempt, affecting staff scheduling
- There may be a need for additional FTEs and additional non-personnel funding due to anticipated expansion within the next biennium.

Anticipated Changes To Service Area Products and Services

- New Program - Beginning in FY 2006, the SFMO will be undertaking up to 1,500 new inspections under a new program for inspecting nightclubs, private schools, private college dormitories, private hospitals and large seat-of-government buildings. The "roll out" plan will involve presentations to affected groups and fees for some of these groups to cover costs for additional staff.
- Projected Increase in Inspections - In FY 2005, the State Fire Marshal's Office conducted 10,273 inspections. The SFMO projects an increase of approximately 9% by the end of FY 2007, for an approximate total of 11,200 inspections.

Service Area Human Resources Summary

Service Area Human Resources Overview

Service Area Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Position Summary

Effective Date:	6/1/2006
Total Authorized Position level	36
Vacant Positions	5
Non-Classified (Filled).....	0
Full-Time Classified (Filled)	31
Part-Time Classified (Filled)	0
Faculty (Filled)	0
Wage	5
Contract Employees	0
Total Human Resource Level	36

Factors Impacting Service Area Human Resources

The SFMO has had a steady increase in the numbers of inspections, with a total increase of 18.4% in 2006 over 2003 numbers and an anticipated increase of 9.5% in FY 2007 over 2006 numbers. The increasing paperwork involved and documentation requirements necessitate the request for additional office help.

Anticipated Changes in Service Area Human Resources

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Service Area Financial Summary

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$2,075,339	\$530,160	\$2,075,339	\$530,160
Changes To Base	\$310,041	\$50,791	\$165,041	\$20,791
SERVICE AREA TOTAL	\$2,385,380	\$580,951	\$2,240,380	\$550,951

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Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

Objective 56203.01

Provide a safe environment for people working and residing in private, state-owned and institutional buildings where the State Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for inspections.

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Enhance the health and safety of the built environment in a cost effective manner.

This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 56203.01.01**

Percentage of inspected mandated buildings that will be brought into compliance with the Virginia State

Measure Type: Output

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: In FY 2005, 99.6% of the mandated buildings were brought into compliance within the specified time frame.

Measure Target: Achieve 100% compliance rate in FY 2007 and 2008 for inspections of mandated buildings, with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and the Life Safety Code within a specified time frame after the initial inspection.

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data is compiled via monthly report from spreadsheets on each inspector's computer

Objective 56203.01 Has the Following Strategies:

- All blasters must be licensed by DHCD Division of Building and Fire Regulations, SFMO.
- The SFMO conducts random inspections to ensure compliance or answer complaints concerning fireworks and explosives. The SFMO responds to complaints within two days and makes initial assessments within one week.
- The SFMO issues permits for firework displays for state colleges and universities.
- The SFMO provides education to clients and client groups on new and upcoming code changes that will affect them via meetings and presentations.
- The SFMO provides consultative and technical assistance services to local building and fire officials, architects, engineers, contractors, building owners, and occupants. The SFMO offers code assistance on the Uniform Statewide Building Code and the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. The National Fire Protection Association Codes and Standards, including Installation of Sprinkler Systems 13, National Fire Alarm Code 72, Standard for the Installation of Standpipes and Hose Systems 14, and Standard for the Installation of Centrifugal Fire Pumps 20, are some of the other codes and standards that often involve clients requests for assistance. This helps ensure that buildings in Virginia meet the codes before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued and provides a safe environment to the citizens.
- The SFMO makes public service announcements through the news media, including TV, radio, and newspapers, during the year. News releases include warnings on the dangers associated with Christmas trees, tips to help prevent fires during the holiday and heating seasons, safety information during Fire Prevention Week in October and dangers of fireworks during the 4th of July activities.

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- The SFMO provides construction inspections for state-owned buildings in conjunction with the Department of General Services, Bureau of Capital Outlay Management Department, to ensure code compliance before a state building receives a Certificate of Occupancy.
- By the beginning of FY 2007, the SFMO will initiate inspections of 22 state seat-of-government buildings most of which are high-rises.
- The SFMO inspects all state-owned or operated college dormitories.
- The SFMO inspects all state-owned or operated residential care facilities.
- The SFMO inspects all of Virginia's licensed health-care facilities.